

REMARKS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections and rejection set forth in the above-mentioned Official Action in view of the foregoing amendments and the following remarks are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-7 and 9-11 are now pending in the application, with Claim 3 having been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner. Of the remaining claims, Claims 1 and 11 are independent. Claim 8 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter recited therein. Claims 1-7 and 9-11 have been amended herein.

Initially, the Office Action states that the certified copy of the priority application (Japanese Patent Application No. 2003-080204) has not been received by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. However, the certified copy was filed on July 7, 2004. Moreover, a review of the file in PAIR confirms that the foreign priority document was received in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. It is respectfully requested that the next communication acknowledge receipt of the certified priority document.

The drawings were objected to, suggesting that Figures 24-29 should be labeled --Prior Art--. Figures 24-29 has been labeled --Prior Art-- in the Letter Transmitting Corrected Formal Drawings being filed concurrently herewith. Accordingly, withdrawal and reconsideration of the objection to the drawings are respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 9-11 were objected to for informalities and have been amended herein. Accordingly, withdrawal and reconsideration of the objection to Claims 1-5 and 9-11 are respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5 and 8-11 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 5,625,385 (Suzuki). Claims 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,345,262 (Shirato et al.). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As recited in independent Claim 1, the present invention relates to a discharging apparatus having a discharge head in which a plurality of discharge nozzles are arranged to discharge liquids supplied from supply ports through discharge ports, and formed such that some of the plurality of discharge nozzles discharge liquids having different liquid compositions. The apparatus includes removing means for removing a liquid in each of the discharge nozzles by applying a pressure difference between the supply port and discharge port of each discharge nozzle. The removing means further comprises a cap member which operates to cover either the supply port or discharge port, when removing the liquid in one of the discharge nozzles, so as to come into tight contact with the discharge head. The removing means accumulates the liquids removed from the discharge nozzles through a filtration unit and a deaeration unit, such that liquids having the same liquid composition are accumulated together in a liquid collection container and can be used again.

As recited in independent Claim 11, in a discharging apparatus having a discharge head in which a plurality of discharge nozzles are arranged to discharge liquids supplied from supply ports through discharge ports, and formed such that some of the plurality of discharge nozzles discharge liquids having different liquid compositions, a removing method includes the step of applying a pressure difference between the supply port and discharge port of each of the discharge nozzles, thereby removing a liquid in each discharge nozzle. A cap member which covers either the supply port or discharge port of one of the discharge nozzles is brought into contact with the discharge head, and the liquid in the one discharge nozzle is removed through the cap member. The liquids are removed from the discharge nozzles through a filtration unit and a deaeration unit, such that liquids having the same liquid composition are accumulated together in a liquid collection container and can be used again.

Suzuki is directed to an ink jet recording apparatus having plural caps corresponding to plural recording heads for ink jet performance recovery. The ink jet cartridges eject inks of various colors. Although the jet performance recovery processing can be performed on the recording heads of various colors sequentially through different ink suction passages, the discharged ink is collected into a discharge ink tank. Applicants submit that all of the ink of various colors is accumulated in the same discharge ink tank.

Accordingly, Suzuki fails to disclose or suggest at least removing liquids from discharge nozzles through a filtration unit and a deaeration unit, such that liquids having the same liquid composition are accumulated together in a liquid collection container and can be used again, as is recited in independent Claims 1 and 11.

Thus, Suzuki fails to disclose or suggest important features of the present invention recited in the independent claims.

Shirato et al. relates to an ink jet recording method that utilizes electrothermal transducers. However, Shirato et al. is not believed to remedy the deficiencies of Suzuki noted above with respect to the independent claims.

Accordingly, independent Claims 1 and 11 are patentable over the citations of record. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the §§ 102 and 103 rejections are respectfully requested.

For the foregoing reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that the present invention is patentably defined by independent Claims 1 and 11. Dependent Claims 2, 4-7, 9 and 10 are also allowable, in their own right, for defining features of the present invention in addition to those recited in the independent claim. Individual consideration of the dependent claims is requested.

In addition, although Claim 3 has been withdrawn from consideration by the Examiner, in the event Claim 1 is allowed, it is respectfully requested that Claim 3 be rejoined and also allowed due to its dependency on Claim 1.

Applicants submit that the present application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration, withdrawal of the objections and rejections set forth in the above-noted Office Action, and an early Notice of Allowability are requested.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

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